

LADIES' COLUMN.

A Budget of News and Notes Fresh from Many Sources.

Dress Philosophically Considered—Hints for Toilets—Wedding Fripperies and Bridesmaids' Finery.

Christmas in the Home, Decorated and Beautified—Chips for Workroom and Kitchen.

Many minds in many lands have been for the past week swayed by a single thought, that finds expression in shopping expeditions and oftentimes, almost pathetic utterance in burden bearing men and women. Odd shaped bundles are seen, and there is no surmise as to their significance. They contain as much pleasure as can be put into a parcel. In addition the women have had an abundance of their favorite occupation of shopping, and have feasted their eyes and emptied their purses amid the glories of the shops that at no season are so brilliantly seductive as during the month of December. Nor is this attractiveness confined to such exhibits as come under the head of holiday purchases, but on the prosaic line of clothes the counters of the dry goods merchants have their special temptations over which shoppers are wont to hover, and should wives drop some hint of pretty dress or cloak the ear of the husband often heeds. In fact, the elegant materials displayed are enough to turn the soberest head, and the harmonious and contrasting color are bewildering in their beauty.

Indeed, the long, close-fitting cloaks, with their bands of fur, are very enticing, and there can be no mistake in purchasing, as they are the rage. These are shown in two shapes:

The Russian mantle, with long over-shoulders reaching to the edge of the dress, is the favorite, and is made in a number of different materials, but chiefly in broad cloth, with fur or passementerie trimmings—these last, although of plain silk, are wonderfully rich, and sometimes so elaborate that they cover a considerable portion of the mantle. The sleeves generally fall straight from the neck, but in one new model it is mounted with a beaded box plait on the shoulder, and joined with foils to the front and back of the mantle as far as the waist.

The long cloaks have an added value, that they are economical, as well as stylish, enabling one to wear with perfect safety a dress not far removed from shabbiness.

The commendable tendency of present modes is that it is in a sensible direction, suitability and appropriateness being its strong points. The toilet for the drawing-room does not in the least resemble the dress worn upon the promenade, and the woman who confounds the one with the other finds herself greatly at variance with the canons of good taste and elegance which happily prevail just now. The extreme caprice, the luxury, and elaborateness of the home and evening toilet are finely counterbalanced by the elegant and simple simplicity of those designed for the promenade. The only fault of the latter costumes consists in a recent tendency to lengthen the skirt—a departure as the wrong direction which cannot be checked too soon. It is an untidy and burdensome fashion, and contrary to all laws of sanitation. For the rest, woman's dressing at home and abroad is just now admirable. The odious tournure is reduced to normal lines, the sleeves of dresses allow for freedom, and free circulation of the blood through the arms; draperies are easy and graceful, and in perfect accordance with the figure, and facing is almost a thing of the past.

There is also a certain degree of independence that is permissible, and it is of great advantage that no one is obliged to follow any certain, undeviating methods or fixed unchangeable laws regarding their dress. So many and so diversified are the phases of fashion, that it at last appears within human possibilities to satisfy all eyes, tastes, passions and purposes. And besides all the endless styles and caprices, if some bright genius of the wardrobe can evolve from her own quick brain something yet unthought of and attractive, so much the better for the fair originator, whose taste, if correct and praiseworthy, is immediately commended and copied as a tribute to her ingenuity. Some of the most beautiful and finished toilets noted this season have been those wherein the designer of the gowns has exercised her own taste and art in combining the various elements of a number of toilets into one, partaking in a degree of the phase and effect of each of the several styles, without, as we have said above, making an absolute copy of any one model.

Many women who have graceful figures are wearing upon the promenade, stylish tailor-made empire gowns. The bodice portion has either a pointed or round-necked effect, and to the bodice the skirts are applied by pleats or shirtings, or often both. A very handsome costume of this description is formed of a beautiful shade of pine-green India camel's hair, over a skirt of suede-colored cloth elaborately braided in green, in intricate and ingenious devices. The overskirt portion opens over a bodice vest of the same light cloth, and at the waist is a soft double scarf, this of dark-green silk, matching the soutache braid in color. The long ends are carried through a large gold buckle, which appears low on the left side of the waist. In suit with this costume is a bonnet of green cloth, trimmed with a crown band and loops of suede-colored velvet, overlaid with green and gold gaiters.

In the preparation of elaborate winter dress toilets, there has thus far been shown but little novelty in the arrangement of the skirt portion of the gown, either short or demi-trained. As a compensation for this, the corsage is all the more varied; and very lovely and novel effects, accomplished by the liberal use of lace, tulle, velvet and flowers, are constantly multiplying. One of the graceful features which find special favor in full evening toilets is the arrangement of cream tulle on the corsage, known as the "Recamier berthia." This is draped like a veritable cloud about the top of the décolleté corsage. The airy scarf is carried across the front and back, being fastened down once in the middle and on each side of the shoulders, this making a billowy puff over the shoulders that forms all the sleeve there is. Another favorite method is to sew the straight sides of some costly lace together, to form a scarf, covering the points where it is caught up with sprays of fine flowers. The same scarf is arranged to form sleeves, which can be shortened by raising the scalloped edges on the outer portion of the arm, carrying them high on the shoulders, and also fastening them

with epaulets of dainty blossoms and foliage.

The newest vests simulate a pleated or gathered blouse. This is made of the dress material, or more often of a soft silk, as sarah. It is closely pleated in fine pleats, set off at the waist line and folds of the silk arranged loosely across the front to make a sash effect. This vest is fastened in at the side seams and no opening is visible in front. The jacket is plain in the back, rather short, with high standing collar, coming round to meet the revers in front. This collar sets up over the collar of the vest at the back, but displays it in front. A light silk under-blouse brightens up a dark dress for the evening. The blouse could also be finished with a belt of velvet to match the jacket. This is made either pointed or straight in front.

Just a little startling to old-fashioned ideas of bridal outfits is the modern idea of black underwear. It was looked upon at first as the momentary freak of some aspiring fashion leader, but there is no denying its popularity. Black hosiery and petticoats are a fixture; night robes, chemises and drawers soon will be. Forming a part of a unique bridal set made in one of the large cities for an expectant bride are some of these somber hued garments. The black night robe is of China silk, made Mother Hubbard. A short, shirred yoke is drawn up with orange ribbons, these to be removed at washing. A coat sleeve with a puff at the top, black lace trim at the neck and sleeves, and bottom flounce, finished the novel garments.

These black night robes are startling, but they grow on one. They are well adapted for traveling, for sleeping cars and for possible accidents. They neither catch dust, wrinkle or advertise their use. To be mashed up in that sort of a garment would be no humiliation. The black night robe is a garment of destiny. The chemise to match is a low-cut, sleeveless thing, trimmed with black silk lace, through which runs orange ribbon. At the waist line runs a shir, through it the orange ribbon to tie it down. The bottom of the chemise finished with lace ruffles makes the undershirt.

The drawers are also of black and the trimming curves upward on the outside seams, where the ribbons meet in little fluffy knots.

At each wedding not long since the bridesmaids carried muffs made of yellow and white chrysanthemums, these arranged at either end of the muff; the center, of moss, supported a spray of yellow roses and maidenhair fern placed crosswise. There were no flowers on the side of the muff that would rest against the gown, only moss. By a graceful arrangement of greenery made to resemble fringe around the sides of the muff, the absence of lining of any sort is not observed.

Some of the latest toilets for these fair attendants are charmingly quaint and old-fashioned in effect, and a number of exceedingly rich and expensive gowns of this description, are modeled after dresses popular in the sixteenth century. In no case, however, are elaborate styles made. Features and characteristics are made use of, both of bodice and skirt, rendering the toilets, when completed, far prettier and more attractive by their novelty than the wholly modern costume, to which we are so accustomed, or the wholly antique gown, that modeled and unmodified in any of its details, would appear erratic and often decidedly outre.

One of the prettiest ball dresses of the season was made a few days since by a successful modiste. The dress had a waist of simple white tulle entirely embroidered in black and red roses. The skirt was of tulle with a scarf of silk caught up near the edge with a cluster of artificial flowers like embroidery.

A pretty finish for a holiday dress is a band of lace, either black or white. These are easily made, but take a good deal of time in the making.

The foundation is a silk cord. It must be of the color of the lace, two yards long, or a little longer for a very tall person. Sew up the ends of the cord tightly, so that it can't unravel out. Take a long needle full of silk, and run the lace with fine stitches along the upper edge. Draw your thread up so as to pull the lace as you go. Begin at one end of the cord by gathering the lace very full, to form a tassel. Now wind the lace round and round the cord, spiral fashion, catching it to the cord as you go, to keep it in place. The fuller you can make it—but not too full—the prettier it will be. It must be very puffy in the middle, where it passes around the neck; and the lace must be reversed, so as to fall towards the other end, after you pass the center. A little care will make it look well. Any light lace makes up prettily. These bands are worn with the ends hanging, or looped one within another in front.

Small toques and turbans of the newest description continue to be highly popular.

The short, puffed empire sleeves are worn for both low and semi-low bodices.

Black is the only thing permissible for children's shoes, stockings and leggings. Pretty little Bulgarian hoods for the opera are made of cream-white camel's hair bordered with gold or silver embroidery.

Though green remains in all the pale shades the leading color, blue in the same tones, says an English high authority, is coming rapidly into favor.

For evening wear a pretty novelty is the box of roses made of pink, red or yellow roses, strung together closely without green leaves.

A new embroidery seen on some of the imported dresses is of silver thread on scarlet cloth bands, used to trim dark blue, green and brown dresses.

There is a great tendency to trim skirts round the edge, especially with narrow fur, and embroideries on both day and evening skirts commence round the edge and graduate upward.

Where panels are used on a skirt they must be either in narrow gore-shape, or, if of pleatings, not stiffly tacked, as was so long the style, but left to fly apart at each motion of the wearer.

A mere thread of gold to which hangs a small flat pendant, bearing the owner's initials on one side and a favorite quotation on the other, is considered the most chaste and elegant fancy for a bangle.

Smock frocks are all the go, and are "English, you know." They are simply a skirt tucked above a deep hem and gathered full about the neck and again at the belt into a wide band. Some of them have herring-bone embroidery.

Among the pretty novelties in fancy goods come gentlemen's shaving-paper cases made of figured tissue paper in all colors and shades, with such motives as these on the faces: "A sharp razor turns away wrath. Shave, shave or the girls will rave."

The Carmelite dressing gown, which is to be had in peach-color, russet, gray, old blue and old rose flannels, has a monk's head, a giraffe of heavy knotted

cord and loose monk's sleeves, which, as well as the head and loose fronts, are faced with white silk.

New hairpins are exceptionally fanciful. Cupid's arrow, Mercury's wand, St. Peter's crozier, all do duty for them, while the mark of interrogation, either in silver or frosted gold, not merely holds up beauty's hair, but clasps her laces or dangles a charm at her wrist.

There are some new aprons of fancy pongee silk, with revers of velvet down each side, which have just made their appearance; and also some of Swiss embroidered white cambric, in the style of the dress pieces sold last year and the year before, with the embroidery rising upward from the edge; and also the same in India silk. All aprons are long and mounted in gathers at the waist.

A fur-trimmed evening dress was of the softest duff white silk. About the hem of the plain underskirt ran a broad band of black fur and up the left side of the simply draped overdress. A wide border of fur also outlined the shoulders and bottom of the décolleté bodice. This is a striking and becoming toilet, the dark fur giving the desired effect of whiteness to shoulders and arms that the black velvet does.

Household.

The week preceding the holidays is usually too full of busy preparation for any reading of homilies, and it is well that once a year the busy housewife finds time in pleasure.

The Christmas customs of foreign lands have never obtained in this country to a great extent, but it is pleasant to observe a growing interest in the revival of time-honored usages.

It is not well to let the prosaic always rule. A touch of poetry brightens life wonderfully, and child life, full as it is of imagination, often starves in the dull routine of hard practicality.

Many of the English customs are very pretty, among these is the use of mistletoe and holly in decorating the home, and there is little excuse if here, in the land of mistletoe, our houses are not bright with it, the wax berries and the red of holly forming beautiful contrasts. Let no mother count it trivial, but lend her hearty support to the work of boys and girls in adorning the home, however unpretentious it may be.

Christmas trees are easily obtained and a few candles, a little tinsel with the aid of red, green, and gold, makes a well possible a few simple toys and the cup of juvenile pleasure will well nigh overflow.

"The Christmas dinner must not be overlooked. In old England a boar's head with gilded tusks always formed the pièce de résistance, and the wassail bowl with roasted apples floating was freely passed, that all might drink to mutual good health. Roast turkey, the American dish, is now the favorite Christmas dish, and old Virginians sip egg-nog, finding ready imitators among those who are not total abstainers. In both countries plum pudding succeeds the meat courses and it is a time honored custom to pour brandy over it just before bringing to the table, setting it on fire, the blue flames give a weird effect and the burnt spirit adds digestion that is liable to be overtaxed by so much of Christmas cheer. A word of caution to an ambitious housewife, be sure and educate your husband as to this burning pudding lest he, like "that husband of mine," rush frantically from the table to rescue the servant bearing it from the peril of the fire.

An old-fashioned game that has afforded generations of English children infinite amusement is a soup-dragon, a shallow dish has inside of it, heavily puffed over and set a fire, and the fire consists in snatching these out without burning the fingers. Be sure and hang the mistletoe in convenient places, the girls never mean to get under it, oh, but sometimes the boys catch them there and then there is a pretty show of resistance and plenty of fun.

These few words are only a plea for a relaxation from the tight line of duty, it may and doubtless will entail a week but with the goal of happiness so near there can be no complaining if it cost a little extra effort to reach it.

One word and THE GAZETTE will say a Merry Christmas to all, let each member of the family seek out some needy one and by their efforts enable that one to share in the common joy by ministering to his or her creature-comfort, or heart-hunger, and when day closes there will be happiness where else all might be dark.

RECIPES.
Breakfast Muffins—Two cups of oatmeal, one cup of flour, one large spoonful of butter, the same of molasses, one small teaspoon of soda; use milk enough to make a batter.

Hot Salad—One pound of boiled ham, sliced fine, one half dozen small pickles, also chopped fine, add a little chopped celery, and serve with a dressing as for chicken salad.

Chocolate Cake—One cup of butter, 3 cups of brown sugar, 1/2 teaspoonful of salt, 5 eggs, 1 cup of milk, 1 teaspoonful of soda, dissolved in water, 1/2 cake of chocolate grated, 3 cups of flour, flavor with vanilla.

Sweet Cake—Three-quarters pound of crushed sugar in half-timbered, add water, heat until thoroughly dissolved on the stove. Have six eggs beaten very light, add the sugar and water; grated rind of lemon; three teaspoonfuls lemon juice; half pound of sifted flour. Mix well together.

Sweet Sauce—Beat up the yolks of four eggs with four tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar; add a tumblerful of sherry and a liquor glass of brandy; put the mixture in a jug; place this in a saucepan of boiling water on the fire, and froth up the same with a chocolate mill.

Silver Cake—One and one-half cups of sugar, one-half cup of butter and cornstarch, one and one-half cups of flour, one-half cup of sweet milk, the whites of six eggs, flavor with one teaspoonful of lemon and one-half teaspoonful of vanilla.

"New Way" Potatoes—Twelve small potatoes, three boiled onions, mash them together, adding three ounces of butter, tablespoonful of chopped parsley, one-half pint of cream, salt and pepper to taste. Use small vegetable dishes, and add a piece of lemon peel to each dish; bake fifteen minutes.

Potato Pudding—Boil four large potatoes and pass them through a sieve; stir into them powdered loaf sugar to taste, and the yolks of two or three eggs; add a few drops of essence of lemons then the whites of the eggs whisked to a froth; mix quickly and well; pour into a plain mold, buttered and breadcrumbed, and bake for twenty minutes in a quick oven.

"Orange Float"—One quart of water, the juice and pulp of two lemons, one coffee cup of sugar. When boiling hot add four tablespoonfuls of corn starch. Let boil fifteen minutes, stirring all the time. When cold pour it over four or five oranges that have been sliced into a glass dish, and over the top spread the beaten whites of three eggs, sweetened and flavored with vanilla.

Little Tarts—It makes variety to have with your pies at the Christmas dinner a

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Inflammation of the Bladder.

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dish of little tarts of different kinds. The piecrust shells can be made a couple of days before. Bake them in your muffin pans if patty pans come short. You can cut the edge of the crust in any fancy style. When baked stand them away on a dish to be filled the morning of the day they are to be used. They are best not filled very full; a small spoonful of fruit or sweetmeats is enough. Take a few spoonfuls of the cranberry sauce for some apple sauce for a few more. Any kind of jelly or jam you have is nice. Fill some with a custard of milk and eggs, stiffened with a little corn starch; this is boiled first, and put in the oven to brown, after it is poured in the shells. By making the tarts in different colors, your dish will be very pretty and tempting.

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